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PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Taoism and Confucian-Legalist Struggle in Western Han

by

Lan Szu (藺思)

(Li-shih Yen-chiu /Historical Research/, No. 3, June 20, 1975)

The two editions of silk books "Lao Tzu" together with a few attached ancient books unearthed from No. 3 Han tomb in Mawangtui, Changsha, were an important discovery, enabling us to gain a further insight into the doctrines of Huang Ti and Lao Tzu in the early period of Western Han as well as the relationship between Taoist thought and the Confucian-Legalist struggle and enlightening us in such a way as to be able to sum up certain historical experience by seeing through the complicated phenomena of the political and ideological struggles in those days.

I. Beginning with "Lao Tzu"

"Lao Tzu" is a representative work of Taoists during the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods. Terse in language but rich in content, this book deals with various problems connected with politics, economics, war, culture and ethics, with special emphasis on military affairs. It is a study of how "sovereigns of the people," "kings and princes" could "gain control of the world," and how to bring "peace and tranquility" to a society riddled by sharpened class contradictions. When discussing military and other social problems, the authors did not confine themselves to the problems as such but, instead, abstracted some general propositions from special problems on the plane of world outlook and sought philosophical answers to problems in various specific fields. Therefore, "Lao Tzu," a military treatise, has often been regarded also as a philosophical dissertation.

War is the continuation of politics, and there is no military thought which is not geared to a certain political thought. At first glance, "Lao Tzu" has this political and ideological characteristic: Not only does it oppose the Confucian school but it also depreciates the Legalist school. On the one hand, it negates the Confucian program, condemns "propriety" of the slave system as the "primary cause of chaos," makes the cynical remark that "however disharmonious a family may be, there are filial sons; however chaotic a state may be, there are loyal ministers," and puts forward the demand for the "relinquishment of benevolence and righteousness." On the other hand, it also opposes "rule of law," saying that "when laws and decrees are enforced rigidly, robbers and thieves will thrive"; it opposes measures to enrich a state and build up a powerful army and the policy of eliminating war by war, saying that "an army is an instrument that will bring disaster" and "the sovereign of the people who lets himself be guided by the Tao does not rule the world with military might"; and it favors "abandoning ingenuity and material gains" so as to "make the people ignorant and void of desires," and opposes the reform movement of the Legalists. To distinguish itself from Confucian and Legalist schools, it draws up a social blueprint for "a small state with a

small population" in which there is no struggle and conflict -- a picture where "neighboring states can look on each other, each can hear the crowing of chickens and barking of dogs in the other's territory and without mutual visits between people till their death." This blueprint was neither one of the Western Chou in its heyday which Confucius dreamed of restoring nor that of a feudal country the Legalists sought to establish; it was that of a world existing independently outside the pre-Ch'in struggle between the Confucian and Legalist political lines.

What did the political thought of this third line reflect -- the demands of which class, stratum or social group?

During the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods Chinese society was undergoing a basic change in the substitution of the slave by the feudal system. Since being determines consciousness, people of different classes, strata and social groups reacted differently to this major change in social system, and there appeared what was known as the situation of a hundred schools of thought contending with one another. However, there were actually two schools of thought: One was the Legalist school representing the newly emerging landlord class, welcoming this major change in social system and seeking vigorously to pave the way for the appearance of the new feudal system; the other was the Confucian school representing the big slave-owning aristocracy, opposing this big change in social system and desperately trying to defend and restore the slave system. All the others were just subordinate to one of these two schools and became its allies with different degrees of cohesion.

The authors of "Lao Tzu" called themselves "the weak," but they were neither slaves nor members of the growing landlord class, but members of the lower stratum of the declining slave-owners. These people, suffering from blows from revolutionary storms and internal conflicts of the slave-owning class, lost everything, not only their political and economic privileges but also their confidence in their own class. Dissatisfied with the big slave-owning aristocrats, they believed that the Confucian doctrines were useless to the world and that the heyday of Western Chou could not be restored. However, they could not cut off the umbilical cords which bound their bodies to their own class; hence, they could not accept, indeed instinctively resisted, the Legalist thought, the new things and the revolutionary scene. They wrote extensively with the objective of finding a third road and a third kind of future whereby their own stratum could live amid peace and stability. However, in a society with opposing classes, in years of social convulsions, a third road simply did not exist, and the third kind of future could not but be an illusion. Either it was the restoration of the old system or it was the victory of the new. There must be one or the other. Those who favored the third kind of future, no matter whether they realized it or not, could, in the last analysis, only be helpful to the reactionaries and become their allies in fact. It was exactly in such a way that the pre-Ch'in Taoists went over to the side of the Confucians. Their weapon for deprecating the Legalist school was left-over from the Confucian personalities. Their

illusion for a "small state with a small population," while it on the surface seemed to oppose the domination of big slave-owning aristocrats, essentially was for the practice of the system of granting fiefs under the dictatorship of small slave-owners, and the result would still lead to dictatorship by the big slave-owners. Their prescription for "action without conflict," reconciling contradictions and abolishing violence was designed to negate the progressive line of the Legalists calling for seizure of political power by revolutionary violence, and in actual fact met the political needs of the restorationists of big slave-owners. To be sure, the pre-Ch'in Taoists' discontent with the slave-owning aristocrats and their anti-Confucian speeches were such that they also objectively proved favorable to the Legalists in their struggle against the Confucians. But it must be seen that they started from a different premise and a different line than the Legalists in opposing the Confucians, and the results also differed. The two simply cannot be mentioned in the same breath.

Reflected in philosophical thought, this political attitude of the authors of "Lao Tzu" manifested itself as objective idealism and simple dialectics. They created a philosophical category: "Tao." They believed that "Tao" was the "beginning of heaven and earth," the "mother of all things," that everything in the world was produced and dominated by this ultra-material, absolute and eternal "Tao." "Tao" of this nature was a reaction to the ancient simple materialist traditions, and was essentially similar to Confucius' "will of the Heaven." In addition, the authors of "Lao Tzu" advocated reactionary transcendentalism, saying that "one can know the world without leaving home," and this again was similar to Confucius' "born to know." The philosophical essence of "Lao Tzu" is its viewpoint regarding contradictions, which holds that the two contradictory aspects of a thing are dependent on each other, that one cannot exist without the other, and that they too may be transformed into each other. But they do not pay attention to the conditions essential to such transformation; in particular, they do not recognize that transformation has to be effected through struggle. They look upon the state of relative quiet as basic and absolute, saying that "quiet is for a restless ruler" and "what is fundamental is quiet," and thus deny the absolute nature of motion. "Tao" and "quiet" -- these two categories may be said to be a philosophical extension of the illusion for "a small state with a small population." When it comes to contradictions, they sigh over the destiny of their own class and are helplessly obliged to acquiesce in the social reality of major changes.

These contradictions in the political and especially in the philosophical thought of "Lao Tzu" accorded later thinkers a great leeway for activity. Reactionary thinkers often played up its anti-Legalist thesis and objective idealism,while progressive thinkers frequently drew on its dialectical viewpoint and criticism of benevolence and righteousness for their own struggle. The different attitudes adopted by the Confucian and Legalist schools toward Taoism in the early period of Western Han provided a vivid historical precedent.

II. Concerning "Taoist in Appearance and Legalist in Substance"

Having established the Western Han Dynasty, the newly emerging landlord class was faced with the historical task of frustrating the attempt to restore the slave system on various fronts: political, economic, ideological. In this connection, the anti-restoration struggle on the ideological front was far more complicated and difficult than that on other fronts. In spite of the fact that the Confucians, ideological representatives of the slave-owning aristocrats, had their morale and strength considerably sapped as a result of Ch'in Shih Huang's action to burn the books and bury the Confucian scholars alive, they floated to the surface again during the major disturbances toward the last years of the Ch'in Dynasty. After the emergence of Han, large batches of disciples of Confucius and Mencius entrenched themselves in principalities to the east, trumpeted the doctrines of spearatism and restoration, and instigated the princes to rise in revolt and directly challenge the rule of the Western Han Dynasty. Some Legalists in the early period of Western Han maintained a certain degree of political vigilance against the Confucians, yet for a time they were unable to draw a line of demarcation with them ideologically, going to such an extent as to entertain the illusion of absorbing some elements in the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius to serve the regime of the newly emerging landlord class. Before making use of Taoist thought, Ts'ao Ts'an had "gathered together all Taoists and Confucian scholars and asked them for advice for pacifying the population." But the "Confucian scholars, numbering about a hundred, spoke differently, and Ts'an could not make up his mind as to who was right." ("Historical Records: Prime Minister Ts'ao Ts'an") None of the views expressed by the nearly a hundred Confucian scholars could be used to serve the implementation of the Legalist line and the consolidation of the feudal system. As a result, Ts'ao Ts'an adopted the doctrines of Huang Ti and Lao Tzu which held that "when quiet is treasured, the people will be in peace by themselves" and, on the strength of this, became prime minister. So, from 193 B.C. (the second year of the reign of Emperor Hui) when Ts'aoTs'an took over the premiership to 135 B.C. (6th year of the reign of Emperor Wu) when Dowager Tou, who "is fond of the sayings of Huang Ti and Lao Tzu," passed away, Taoist thought had been prevalent for about 60 years in early Han. In this period, the Legalist line was wrapped in a Taoist cloak, and the Confucian-Legalist struggle took on the special form of struggle between the Confucian and Huang-Lao doctrines. There appeared a new phase of the Confucian-Legalist struggle in which "those who study Lao Tzu spurn Confucian learning, while those who study Confucianism spurn Lao Tzu." ("Historical Records: Lao Tzu and Han Fei")

In history, the Legalist line had adopted a variety of theoretical forms. In the pre-Ch'in times, it openly advertised the "study of law and the art of government"; in early Han it assumed the Taoist appearance while remaining Legalist in substance; in the middle and late stages of feudal society, many Legalists took on the Confucian appearance while remaining Legalist inside. This variety of theoretical forms profoundly mirrored the changes in the situation

of class struggle in feudal society and in the historical positions of the landlord class as well.

When the feudalist mode of production with its new vitality broke through the fetters of the slave system and the landlord class was struggling to seize political power, the Legalist line was vigorous and fearless. Unambiguously it raised its own banner and used it to attract the masses and isolate the enemy. This was true with most Legalist theories in pre-Ch'in times and even during the Ch'in Dynasty. Conditions, however, were different in early Han. The political power of Western Han was built up on the basis of utilizing the fruit of the peasant revolution, and the image of the revolutionary peasant, like an ever present nightmare, weighed on the mind of the landlord class. The landlord class, now that it had seized nationwide power, not only had to use its left hand to continue to suppress and curb the restorationist activities of the slave-owners but also had to use its right hand to prevent the peasants from rising again and to destroy their fighting will. Policies also had to be formulated to rehabitate the war-torn economy. Liu Pang, Emperor Kao, time and again asked his policy-makers to sum up the experience of Ch'in's fall, and this revealed how he had sensed, albeit vaguely, both the urgency and importance of formulating a set of policies which not only incorporated the Ch'in institutions but were also tactically different from those of the defunct Ch'in. However, in the years of rule of Emperor Kao, years in which "the world was ravaged by bitter fighting which went on for years on end with success hanging in the balance" ("Historical Records: Chronicles of Kao Tsu"), it was possible only to adopt some fundamental rule-of-law measures of Ch'in Shih Huang, and time was not enough to shape a complete set of national theoretical forms adaptable to the characteristics of the time. The story of Ts'ao Ts'an, as Prime Minister of Ch'i, in seeking men of worth to fill the vacant posts in his government vividly reflected their anxiety to search for such administrative policies and theoretical forms. While in Ch'i, Ts'ao Ts'an found the Huang-Lao doctrines; so far as ideological tradition was concerned, he might be said to have inherited the practice of the Huang-Lao school in Chihhsia and Shen Pu-hai, Shen Tao and Han Fei in absorbing Taoist thought. And the fact that Ts'ao Ts'an was designated the second prime minister proved that his choice had Liu Pang's whole-hearted support. This kind of "Huang-Lao learning," which pushed the Legalist line under the Huang-Lao cloak and which was described as the guiding thought Taoist in appearance and Legalist in substance, was found to be best suited to the historical position of the landlord class at that very moment; and following the deepening of the anti-restoration struggle in the country and assumption of power by Ts'ao Ts'an, it was widely popularized throughout the country.

A salient feature of the Huang-Lao learning was that unlike the pre-Ch'in Legalist school, it did not advertise itself as embracing the nature of the landlord class but concealed its own class intentions in historical personalities, "anxiously conjure up the spirits of the past to their service." (Marx, "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte") This, to the early Han landlord class which had seen the Ch'in Dynasty

fall and had experienced the peasant storms, was of extremely vital significance. Not only did they conceal the class content of their own actions from the peasants and slave-owners, they even "concealed their own content from themselves." (Ibid.) They took Huang Ti and Lao Tzu as the ideal sages, and this Huang-Lao image was actually that of a hero shaped by the Western Han Legalists according to their own image. According to the description in "Chronicles of Five Emperors, Historical Records," in the final days of the Shen Nung clan in high antiquity, the princes fought among themselves in a confused fashion and "brought disasters on the common people"; the Shen Nung clan was unable to restore peace in the world. So, Huang Ti, Hsüan Yüan, studied the war game and personally led a big expeditionary force against the rebels, beating Yen Ti in the fields of Panch'üan, wiping out Chuyu on the plains of Cholu, beating Hunchu (i.e., the Huns) who were harrassing Tamo in the north, and thus had the world under unified control. Huang Ti's life was spent in fighting. "Huang Ti attacked and eliminated those who turned against him, building military works and roads on the plains and in the mountains, and he never had a moment of rest." Although "Chronicles of Five Emperors" was written by Ssuma Ch'ien, such legends concerning Huang Ti were not known in the pre-Ch'in times. Besides, attached to Edition B of the unearthed silk book "Lao Tzu" were four ancient essays including "Ching Fa," and these, according to verifications done by some comrades, were "Huang Ti's Four Classics" recorded in "Treatise of Literature, History of Han," and were completed in early Han. Among these, "Shih Ta Ching" took the form of conversations between Huang Ti and his lieutenants centering on the discussion of how to administer political affairs in the spirit of the "rule of law," to achieve the goal "I alone have control of the world" in order to change the chaotic situation brought on by the "increasing instability of the country." Please look, how much "Huang Ti" in these works resembled Ch'in Shih Huang and Han Kao Tsu! He was a great Western Han Legalist garbed in a costume of high antiquity, calling for eliminating war through war, opposing separatism and bringing the world under unified control.

As to Lao Tzu, according to people of Western Han, he originally served the Son of Heaven of Eastern Chou. Once, Confucius asked him about "propriety." He replied: "Propriety" was a decadent, hypocritical word, not worthy of being mentioned, adding that one should be quiet and must not act recklessly. Confucius had nothing but admiration for his unfathomable principles. Later on, Lao Tzu, "seeing the decay of Chou" (Historical Records: Lao Tzu and Han Fei"), was disappointed in the slave system, resigned and became a hermit. But his "hermitage" happened to be the state of Ch'in, a state that was trying to make itself rich and strong. This again formed a striking contrast between him and Confucius who "refused to visit Ch'in while travelling to the west." How could he "conceal" himself in such a "controversial" place as Ch'in? So, according to the legends spread by people of Western Han, Lao Tzu might be the same person who held the post of official historian in the state of Ch'in. In the presence of Duke Hsien of Ch'in, this official historian elaborated on the inevitability of Chou's fall and Ch'in's emergence,

and he was highly regarded by the former. These puzzling legends had a revelation: Lao Tzu, as known in the legends circulated in Western Han, was the teacher of Confucius, and a Legalist theoretician acclaiming the newly engendered feudal system.

While the disciples of Confucius and Mencius used Yao and Shun to defame the Legalists, the Western Han Legalists brought out the legendary Huang Ti, the founder of the Chinese nation, to refute Yao and Shun. While the disciples of Confucius and Mencius took Confucius as the patriarch, the Western Han Legalists recommended and admired Lao Tzu -- Confucius' teacher. It becomes extremely clear that the Western Han Legalists, in promoting Huang-Lao, were far from being nostalgic about the past; on the contrary, in doing so, they put on the ancient costumes that fitted the figure of their own class at the time and staged a new performance in honoring Legalism and opposing Confucianism.

To be able to wear the Huang-Lao costumes, however, some practical problems had to be solved. As we know, Huang Ti was an enigma who had no theories to be passed on to later generations; he was what people of Western Han made him out to be. This was not so with Lao Tzu, to whom a work of five thousand characters was attributed. The authors of these five thousand characters might expand his views in various ways, yet the content of these five thousand characters had to be seriously criticized and transformed before it could be made to fit in with the Legalist line.

The highest category of "Lao Tzu" is "Tao," and its greatest demand is to "keep Tao." It uses "keep Tao" to oppose following propriety and observing the law. The early Han Legalists acknowledged this "Tao" to be supreme, the determinant of all things. But in some ingenuous ways they stressed that Tao was Fa /law/ and that to keep Tao was to observe Fa. In this way, they negated the anti-Legalist thought in Taoism and opposed the Confucian line of returning to the Chou propriety, thereby using Tao to serve Fa. The silk book "Ching Fa" begins with this sentence: "Tao breeds Fa." "When those who follow Tao produce Fa, no one will dare to break it. When Fa is established, none will dare to abolish it." It holds that "Tao is followed" only when the Legalist line is adhered to, not violated nor abolished. Then, it repeatedly proves that "the enforcement of law and measures is the highest principle of government" and "when Tao is followed and the law and measures are enforced, the world will be unified." Only the law and measures provide the basic assurance for the centralization of power, national unification and stability in the empire. Thus, in the name of recommending Tao, they actually promoted Fa. When Tao gained one foot, Fa gained ten. A new historical form was created for the Legalist theories.

Another important category of "Lao Tzu" is "quiet," and it calls for "inaction" by men. It uses "inaction" to oppose the action of the Legalists and the reckless doings of the Confucians. But this "inaction" during the Warring States period was already interpreted by

many Legalists as meaning "forgetting oneself and doing everything on the basis of Fa." And the special historical conditions of early Han gave this concept a new life.

During the rule of Empress LÜ, "both the ruler and the ministers wanted to take a respite and do nothing." ("Historical Records: Empress LÜ") Ts'ao Ts'an said to Emperor Hui: "When Emperor Kao and Hsiao Ho pacified the empire, they had made the laws and decrees very clear. Now that Your Majesty have ascended the throne, may we, Ts'ao and others, keep to our duties and simply follow the established policies?" ("Historical Records: Prime Minister Ts'ao Ts'an") To strictly follow the well-defined line of rule of law was what was meant by the early Han rulers as "inaction" in the midst of a "respite." Thus, in an important way they utilized and transformed Lao Tzu's doctrine of inaction. The silk book "Shih Ta Ching" also states: "To know gain and loss, one must examine the name and look at the form. When form is constant and fixes itself, this means quiet. When things are done constantly in the same way, this means inaction." Quiet or inaction is limited to a definite premise, namely, examining the name and observing the form, in other words, studying the provisions of the laws and decrees ("name") and studying the conditions of things ("form"). Such "inaction" was exactly what Ts'ao Ts'an meant.

"Inaction" as meant by the Western Han Legalists was, in political practice, intended to preserve the victories that had been won and to create a phase of stability in order to gradually expand the fruit of victories. This, to early Han and particularly the periods of Empress LÜ, Emperors Wen and Ching, was of vital significance of the first order. At that time, Liu Pang and Hsiao Ho had passed away one after the other; although the Western Han court still retained the ruling position of the Legalist leadership group, yet Emperor Hui was young and many generals in possession of power did not study and were culturally ignorant, so the strength of the Legalist leadership was correspondingly somewhat reduced. If Empress LÜ and Ts'ao Ts'an had not emphasized the need to follow the established Legalist line strictly, the Confucian line might gain control of the central authority at any moment. Under these circumstances, only "inaction" could effectively preserve the ruling position of the Legalist line in the central government and prevent harrassment from the Confucian line of restoration.

Thus, there is a fundamental distinction between "inaction" of Western Han Legalists and "inaction" of "Lao Tzu." In "Lao Tzu," "inaction" was clearly meant to be a negation of struggle. But "inaction" as meant by Western Han Legalists was a kind of means and tactics for struggle. During Emperor Wen's period, many disciples of Confucius and Mencius had said such things as "the empire is now in peace and well-governed," trumpeted "benevolence, righteousness and the granting of favors," and grasped the passive factor of "inaction" to raise the hue and cry that "the most important thing is not to do anything" in an attempt to destroy the fighting will of the newly emerging landlord class, cover the preparations made by the slave-owners in industry and commerce and princes who were members of the

royal family for attack, and create public opinion in favor of capitulation to the Hun slave-owners. Chia I, a young Legalist at that time, exposed the conspiracy of those "brain trusters" who distorted the meaning of "inaction" as abandoning struggle, strongly condemned those "people who claim peace and order is attained as being either fools or flatters," and called for unfolding a positive struggle by relying on "political power and legal institutions" and even the army in order to eliminate the hidden danger and achieve "stability and order." ("History of Han: Chia I") It can be seen that by "inaction" they did not mean to live a passive life of enduring humiliations but to build up the conditions so that one day they might wage an offensive on their own initiative. "Shih Ta Ching" also states explicitly: "When resolute decisions are not taken where they should be taken, chaos will ensue." "Those who wage struggle will be fierce; those who do not wage struggle will not be left alone." Thus it stresses the necessity of struggle. Ch'ao Ts'o's "policy of cutting down the territories of the vassals" was also a tactic for taking the initiative for attack and preventing revolts erupting. By the time of Emperor Wu, "national might had grown greatly," and Liu Ch'e, acting decisively, turned "inaction" or the traditional tactic of taking defense for offense into a policy stressing offense and unfolding an anti-restoration struggle with initiative and on a full scale. Historic victories were at last won in the consolidation of the dictatorship of the landlord class, and an end was put to the period in which the rule of law was "Taoist in appearance and Legalist in substance."

III. Concerning "Interpreting Tao with Confucian Theories"

By practicing "Taoist appearance and Legalist substance," the Western Han Legalists were able to greatly consolidate the Legalist camp and dealt stunning blows to the Confucianists engaged in restorationist activities. The victory of the Huang-Lao doctrines could not but force the reactionary Confucian scholars to change their tactics. So, they too hoisted the banner of supporting Taoism and used the Taoist dross to cover up the Confucian contraband in order to oppose the Legalist line. This tactic was described as interpreting Tao with Confucian theories. A prime example was Liu An, Prince of Huainan.

Liu An (179 B.C.-122 B.C.), devoting his life to splittist and restorationist activities, had participated in the revolts of the seven states including Wu and Ch'u. In 122 B.C., he started an armed revolt against Han. The revolt aborted the same day and he killed himself. A reactionary Confucian scholar, he "was fond of literature and of seeking the limelight," ("Tzu Chih T'ang Chien: Chronicles of Han No. XI) and advertised himself as "benevolent and righteous." Besides actively preparing for an armed revolt, he also engaged in preparing public opinion for restoration in a big way. Under his personal direction, "Taoists" and "Confucian scholars of all types" were recruited and given the task of writing a sinister book described as the work by miscellaneous scholars, "Huainan Tzu." Kao Yu of Eastern Han said: "Liu An had this book written because he was fond of discussing morality

and practiced benevolence and righteousness. His aim was similar to that of Lao Tzu,.... evolving around the way of classics." "Therefore, people well versed in the Confucian works of early sages quoted it and used it to test their theories." (Kao Yu, "Preface to 'Huainan Tzu'") Kao's praise exposed, from the negative aspect, the fact that "Huainan Tzu" "evolved around the way of classics," that is,the deceptive game of interpreting Tao in the Confucian way. It also proved that many Confucian scholars in Western Han used it to "test their theories" in order to trumpet the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius and oppose the Legalist thought.

In "Huainan Tzu," Liu An was used to using Confucian ideas to twist and tamper with the rational things of Taoism. "Lao Tzu" had said "the great Tao was ignored because of benevolence and righteousness" to prove the necessity of "abandoning benevolence and righteousness," and was rather strong in its opposition to Confucianism. Liu An too said that when Tao vanished and virtue decayed "benevolence and righteousness grew," but by saying so he wanted to prove that whereas "Tao was observed by previous generations," today, in a "declining generation," it was necessary to practice benevolence and righteousness, and "men of virtue will perish without benevolence and righteousness." ("Instruction on Refuting Fallacies, Huainan Tzu") In this way, Taoist opposition to benevolence and righteousness was turned into encouragement of benevolence and righteousness. "Lao Tzu" said: "In war, those who are brave but not intelligent will suffer defeat, while those who are both brave and intelligent will win." However, Liu An used this to oppose the Legalist idea of stressing farming and war as an idea of bellicosity, thinking that only those who applied benevolence and righteousness could be "brave and intelligent," and singing the same tune as Lü Pu-wei in extolling Confucius as personifying "bravery and intelligency" because, owing to his practice of benevolence and righteousness, "he was a king without owning any land and obeyed without being an official." ("Instruction on Tao, Huainan Tzu")

"Huainan Tzu" also mixed the Confucian thought with the Taoist cross in preparing counter-revolutionary public opinion for opposing the Legalist line, creating splits and rebellions, restraining oneself and returning to propriety. Liu An said: "Governing the country with propriety will involve no argument. Therefore Lao Tzu said: 'When laws and decrees are enforced rigidly, robbers and thieves will thrive." (Ibid.) Thus, he used the anti-Legalist views of Taoism to prove Confucius' advocacy of returning to propriety, thereby clearly revealing his pro-Confucian, anti-Legalist features. In addition, Liu An played up the objective idealist implication of "Tao" in "Lao Tzu," interpreting "Tao" directly as the Confucian's "Heavenly will," as well as using "interaction between Heaven and man" to prove the relationship between "Tao" and "things." He said: "The feelings of the sovereign are extended to Heaven. Therefore, when he is cruel and violent, there will be hurricanes; when he miscarries justice, pestilences; when he kills the innocent, drought; when he does not abolish harsh laws, continuous rain.... The appearance of rainbow and comet signifies

the anger of Heaven." ("Instruction on Rules of Heaven, Huainan Tzu") When Liu Pi, Prince of Wu, staged a revolt, he used the appearance of a comet as the pretext. In the sixth year of Chienyuan in the reign of Emperor Wu, a comet appeared again and Liu An nonsensically described it as a portent of Heaven. "Now that a comet has appeared, there will be war in the empire." So, he "started producing war equipment and weapons and accumulating money." ("Historical Records: Huainan and Hengshan") It can be seen that in advocating "Tao" Liu An had only the purpose of proving that in starting the revolt he had "the mandate of Heaven."

Liu An was particularly interested in the conservative and regressive views of "Lao Tzu" which held that "those who rule the world now with the ancient Tao will prosper," and he changed the Taoist "ancient Tao" into the Confucian "ancient Tao." "Lao Tzu" said: "Tao is Tao, but not constant Tao." Liu explained this saying: "Reading the poems and books of the early kings is no better than hearing their words; hearing their words is no better than looking at the results of their words; and knowing the results of their words does not enable one to practice in the same way as they. Therefore, Tao is Tao, but not the constant Tao." ("Instruction in Fanlun, Huainan Tzu") So, it is that the "ancient Tao" was something of the early kings that could not be passed on by word of mouth. Then, who mastered this "Tao"? He said: King Wen, who "cultivated himself in virtue and practiced righteousness," mastered "Tao," which was inherited by King Wu, Ch'eng K'ang and Duke Chou. Later on, "Confucius followed the path of Ch'eng K'ang and related Duke Chou's instructions....Therefore, Confucians were his students." His "Huainan Tzu" incorporated the "gist of the original Tao and the styles of the three kings," ("The Outline, Huainan Tzu") and directly inherited this tradition. He announced that his purpose in producing this book was to "praise the prosperity of the early generations and denounce the bad government of the declining generation." In other words, he sang the praises of the "early generations" of King Wu and Duke Chou, and negated the "declining generation" of the Western Han Dynasty. He described the Western Han Dynasty as doomed, and said that it was necessary to "take Tao as the rod, virtue as the line, propriety and music as the hook, and benevolence and righteousness as the bait" in casting a long line to hook big fish. In this way, "states in danger of extinction will be preserved, the line of succession continued," and "destroyed ancestral temples will be rebuilt, and there will be successors." ("Instruction in Shuchen, Huainan Tzu") It is clear that by "interpreting Tao with Confucian theories," Liu An intended to create reactionary public opinion for them to usurp power and restore the old order.

The Western Han Confucianists, no matter whether they directly attacked Huang Ti and Lao Tzu or resorted to interpreting Tao with Confucian doctrines, had one basic purpose: to oppose the Legalist school, the progressive line of the Western Han Legalists in upholding unification and advance. In "Huainan Tzu," people from Shao Cheng Mao to Ch'in Shih Huang were viciously cursed and wildly attacked by Liu An.

He spread the theory that the rule of law was useless. Using the pretext that "words that do not conform to the standard set by the early kings should not be regarded as Tao," he said that those who favored rule of law "do not know the reasons behind order and disorder," and that rule of law "is not the universal principle of the world." ("Instruction in T'aitsu, Huainan Tzu") He advocated the theory that rule of law would lead to national subjugation, saying that "Shang Yang's laws caused the fall of Ch'in." He cursed rule of law as "running counter to the fundamental requirement of virtue," saying "people who practice rule of law will die in less than three months." ("Instruction on Observation of Death, Huainan Tzu") Besides, he used the fallacy in "Lao Tzu" regarding disowning desires and knowledge to attack Emperor Wu as a man full of desires but not of righteousness, saying that "now that he places the emphasis on law and abandons righteousness, he is giving more attention to the hat and the clogs than to the head and feet." (Ibid.) He viciously cried aloud: "The ruler should be dethroned and the government changed" through counter-revolutionary civil war. ("Instruction on Military Strategy, Huainan Tzu")

The fact that the Western Han Confucianists changed their anti-Legalist tactics and interpreted Tao with Confucian theories showed more than anything else that the restorationist force of the slave-owners they represented had further dwindled. Liu An, being the last of the princes who revolted in the early period of Western Han, was most rampant in creating counter-revolutionary public opinion, but he also failed most quickly and most tragically. The revolt staged by the seven states including Wu and Ch'u lasted three months, but Liu An's armed coup did not last even an hour. No decadent ideology could have the reactionary class from inevitable doom.

In Western Han the Legalists practiced "Taoist appearance and Legalist substance" and the Confucianists practiced "interpreting Tao with Confucian theories." Both of them drew their ideological material from the same source -- the Taoist school, but they differed in what they retained or discarded. This was so because, in the first place, Taoist thought and mainly "Lao Tzu" had something to be retained and something to be discarded, and what played the decisive role in this was the different political practice of the Confucian and Legalist schools. Engels said: "As we have seen, the doctrine of Hegel, taken as a whole, left plenty of room for giving shelter to the most diverse practical party views. And in the theoretical Germany of that time, two things above all were practical: religion and politics. Whoever placed the chief emphasis on the Hegelian system could be fairly conservative in both spheres; whoever regarded the dialectical method as the main thing could belong to the most extreme opposition, both in politics and religion." ("Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy") So intricate and complicated are the phenomena in the history of ideological struggle that we must make an effort to study and apply Marxism, look at the essence of a problem through its appearance, and analyze the political inclinations and class interests represented by each school or trend of thought, so as to assess and determine the historical value of various doctrines.

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A Preliminary Inquiry into "Sun Pin's Art of War"

by

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Like "Master Sun Art of War" (also known as "Master Sun of Wu") written by the outstanding military strategist Sun Wu of the latter days of the Spring and Autumn period, "Sun Pin's Art of War" (also known as "Master Sun of Ch'i") written by the noted military strategist Sun Pin of the middle period of the Warring States is a very highly esteemed Legalist military work in the history of our country. But "Sun Pin's Art of War" had been lost from a very early date, and has not been recorded in historical annals since the "History of the Sui Dynasty." Therefore, after Sung Dynasty, especially since Ming and Ch'ing, there had been much controversy over matters regarding whether Sun Wu and Sun Pin were two different men and whether each had written his military work. The case, however, was finally resolved, when in April 1972, "Sun Pin's Art of War," lost for more than a thousand years, was unearthed alongside "Master Sun's Art of War" and other pre-Ch'in military writings in an early Western Han tomb located in the Yinch'üeh Mountains in Lin-i, Shantung. The more important aspect of the discovery lies in the fact that it has furnished valuable new data for our research into the pre-Ch'in struggle between the Confucian and Legalist schools, particularly into ancient military thinking in our country.

Sun Pin, whose exact date of birth and death are still unknown, was a native of the state of Ch'i during the middle period of the Warring States and lived for the most part during the reigns of Kings Wei and Hsüan of Ch'i, approximately in the time of Shang Yang and Mencius.

The middle period of the Warring States in which Sun Pin lived was a time when great social changes were brought about by the substitution of the decadent slave system by the newly emerging feudal system. At this time, the newly emerging landlord class had already taken into its hands most of the state power in the various states on the central plains of the country and introduced relatively widespread political and economic reforms. Between themselves, moreover, there were frequently conducted wars of annexation that were objectively helpful to feudal unification of the country. However, the slave-owner remnant forces in the various states were still very powerful, such that the struggle between restoration and anti-restoration, the struggle waged throughout the superstructure between the two opposing lines of the Confucian and Legalist schools, became extremely acute. In the matter of military thinking, the Legalist school, accommodating itself to the tide of historical development, made every effort to advocate the policy of "farming and war" aimed at making a state rich and strong. It favored the extermination of the slave-owner remnant forces and the feudal splittist forces of the princes through revolutionary violence and the unification of the whole country by means of war. The Confucian school represented by Mencius, on the other hand, frantically opposed the Legalist policy of "farming and war" and peddled

everywhere the Confucian line that stood for "following the examples of early kings," "benevolent government," and "subduing people by virtue." They vilified the war for feudal unification conducted by the newly emerging landlord class as "war when fought in the fields filled them with dead bodies, and when fought in cities filled cities with corpses," and openly cried aloud, "war-mongers deserve the highest punishment." ("Li Lou Part I, Mencius") Chu Hsi said when annotating this passage in "Mencius": "Such war-mongers include Sun Pin, Wu Ch'i and people like them." ("Annotations of the Four Books") Obviously, Sun Pin stood on the opposite side of Mencius both politically and ideologically. The contradiction and struggle between them as regards the military line reflected an important aspect of the sharp polemics between the Confucian and Legalist schools during the middle period of the Warring States.

The state of Ch'i, in which Sun Pin lived, was economically and culturally more developed where the feudal relations of production appeared relatively early. By the time of King Wei, political and economic reforms continued; "laws were formulated with care and evil officials were censured," with the result that "Ch'i was brought to great order." ("Historical Records: T'ien Ching and Chung Wan") As a military strategist of the newly emerging landlord class, Sun Pin stood firmly by the side of the reformists and was entrusted with important responsibilities by King Wei. He contributed brilliantly to Ch'i's efforts in making itself wealthy and strong. Ssuma Ch'ien said: "Kings Wei and Hsüan of Ch'i used Master Sun (Pin) and T'ien Chi, and the princes turned eastward to Ch'i." ("Historical Records: Mencius and Hsün Ch'ing") Political and economic reforms together with frequent wars directly and profoundly influenced and impelled the development of military thinking, and "Sun Pin's Art of War" was precisely the product of such a time.

According to "Treatise of Literature, History of Han," "Sun Pin's Art of War" had 89 chapters and 4 scrolls of illustrations. Now collated and published, "Sun Pin's Art of War" has over 380 tattered bamboo slips, totalling a little more than 11,000 characters. Among the 21 titles of chapters that can be identified are "The Capture of P'ang Chüan," "Replies to Questions Raised by King Wei," "Replies to Questions Raised by Ch'en Ch'i on Fortifications," "The Selection of Troops," "Duration of War," "The Eight Formations," "On Terrain," "Situations," "Study on Troop Movements," "Punishment of Troops," "On Lasting Morale," "Unity Among Officers," "The Ten Formations," "Ten Questions," "Armor," "Distinctions Between the Attacker and the Defender," "The Five Principles of Rewarding and Modesties," "The Meaning of Victory," "How To Be a Good Commander," "Faults To Be Avoided by Commanders," "Strategies: Surprise and Conventional." Because the bamboo slips unearthed are tattered and incomplete, it is difficult to see the whole look of the original work and its entire ideological system. And it is still too early to say whether there are other lost military treatises that got mixed up with it. Judging from what has already been sorted out and put in order, one may see: It inherited and developed the military thinking of the early Legalist military writings, including the 13 chapters of "Master Sun," summed up and drew on the rich experience of war practice since the beginning of the Spring and Autumn period, reflected the interests and political inclinations of the newly emerging

landlord class during the middle period of the Warring States, and embodied clearcut epochal characteristics.

In accordance with Chairman Mao's teachings "make the past serve the present" and "use the Marxist method to critically sum up" the cultural legacy, this article attempts to set forth some crude opinions on such problems as the view and attitude of "Sun Pin's Art of War" on war, its operational guidance, army discipline and philosophical ideas.

(I)

On the issue of war, Sun Pin explicitly advocated "be strong by winning in war" and "settle disputes through war," thus in plain and simple language setting forth the idea of resolving problems by means of war.

War is the continuation of politics, the highest form of class struggle. Therefore, on how to view and deal with war, different classes and different political groups maintain quite different attitudes. Taking the stand of the newly emerging landlord class, Sun Pin saw that in order to consolidate and develop the feudal system and to make the regime of the T'ien clan of the newly emerging feudal class in the state of Ch'i "powerful" and "independent," it was imperative to use war as a means. When Tai Chiang of the T'ien clan was in power, compromises were reached with the old slave-owning aristocrats, and reform was far from being thorough. When King Wei took over, the remnant forces of the slave owners were still rather powerful, while externally it was threatened by the strong feudal states such as Wei and Ch'u. Although Ch'i was reputed to be powerful and prosperous, the struggle for and against restoration and the struggle between secession and unity remained a matter of prime importance facing the newly emerging landlord class. This constituted the historical background against which Sun Pin advanced his views on settling disputes by means of war and "subduing the world by military might."

To refute the reactionary Confucian doctrines about eliminating war by "benevolence and righteousness" and opposing progressive war, Sun Pin referred to historical stories of military conquests by the "five emperors" and "three kings" whom the Confucianists greatly admired to show that war was inevitable. He said: "In the past, Shen Nung battled against Fu Sui, Huang Ti warred against Shu Lu (Chu Lu), Yao attacked Kung Kung,..... T'ang banished Chieh, King Wu marched against Tsou, and Emperor (Shang) crushed a rebellion, and the Duke of Chou resorted to the same practice." "Yao and Shun, too, wanted to settle disputes through benevolence and righteousness. But they were unable to achieve this by such means, hence no choice but to resort to war." If even the "sages" had to resort to war to unify the world and maintain their rule, it was basically absurd to say that "rites" of the slave system could do this in the Warring States period when a new social system was being replaced by a new one. This view of Sun Pin's was a forceful repudiation of what the Confucianists were saying that "Huang Ti, Yao and Shun ruled the world with courtesy (not war)"

(Chou I: Hsitzu Part II), and such fallacies as "with benevolence the world was ruled for three generations" (Mencius: Li Lou Part I) and "military might will not bring you prestige under heaven." (Mencius: Kungsun Ch'ou Part II)

While affirming the inevitability of war, Sun Pin called for a cautious attitude to be taken toward war. He pointed out: "When war is won, a state could be preserved where it would otherwise have perished, and the line of succession would continue where it would otherwise have broken; when war is lost, it would lose its territory and endanger its society. Therefore, military commanders cannot but be cautious. Those who indulge in war will perish, and those who seek gain in victory will be humiliated with defeat. There is nothing whimsical about war, and never has there been anything like an easy victory." Here what is meant by "preserving a state and continuing the line of succession" is entirely different from the reactionary political program -- "reviving states that have been extinguished, restoring the line of succession that has been broken, and calling into office people who have fallen into obscurity" -- put forward by Confucius for the restoration of the slave system. What Sun Pin meant to say was: War has very much to do with the survival or extinction, safety or danger of a state; if it wins in war, it will preserve itself; if it loses in war, it will have to cede territory or even perish altogether; therefore, war must be treated with prudence. This is basically similar to what Sun Wu said: "War is an important matter of the state, bearing on its life or death, survival or extinction; therefore it must be studied seriously." ("Master Sun's Art of War: Strategy") Like Sun Wu, Sun Pin possessed a wealth of experience in war practice, hence he was fully aware of the vital interests at stake in war.

In advocating cautiousness in war, Sun Pin emphasized "preparedness before taking action" in order to "win and avoid defeat." "Defeat is certain without preparedness," and not only would it be impossible to attain the goal of "becoming strong and independent through war," but the dictatorship of the newly emerging landlord class would be endangered, with "territory ceded and society harmed." How should one view "preparedness"? Sun Pin explained: Apart from foreseeing the consequences of war, it was also necessary to make adequate material and mental preparations. He said: "With preparedness, a small city can defend itself; a small army can be powerful should it have justice on its side." This meant adequate material reserves and a proper reason for going to war. When this requirement was met, a small army could be powerful and strong. Of course, "justice" has a class character, and "justice" so referred to by Sun Pin was meant to be favorable to the consolidation and development of the rule of the newly emerging class. This was essentially different from what Confucianists trumpeted when they referred to a "benevolent army" and "righteous war."

Anther valuable thought of Sun Pin's on the issue of war was his emphasis of the need for people directing war to know the laws of war. He said: "Those entrusted with the defense of a large state should know the way of Heaven and the terrain on earth. They should have the support

of the population at home and know the movements of the enemy abroad. They should know how to fight. If they are certain of victory, they must fight; if not, they should not fight. People who do this are good generals." He also said: "Knowledge decides victory or defeat, safety or danger." Among the bamboo slips of "Sun Pin's Art of War" "knowledge" (the Tao or Way) is mentioned as many as several dozen times. Judging by its content generally, it dwells roughly on two kinds of laws -- objective laws and laws of guidance. The passage cited above is obviously meant to pinpoint the need to know the objective laws of war. Besides this more complete elaboration, there are still quite a lot of elaborations on "knowledge" scattered in various chapters. For example, there is a chapter exclusively devoted to "geography." Called "On Terrain," it touches on five different kinds of terrain that could influence the movement of an army and determine its victory or defeat. In such chapters as "Replies to Questions Raised by Ch'en Chi on Fortifications," "Eight Formations," "Ten Questions," and "Ten Formations" references are also made to operational tactics and ways of fighting under different kinds of terrain and under different enemy conditions. Stress was put on the need to "make observations near and far in anticipating the enemy's movement and calculating the risks," and such was the "way of the general." Having dwelt on these five aspects regarding terrain, Sun Pin put forward his assertion that "five factors are involved in attaining regular victory" and "five factors are to be accounted for when unable to win constant victory." He explained: "In order to win regular victories, generals must have full commanding powers; full knowledge of both sides must be attained; the support of the population must be obtained; unity must be achieved among officers and men; and the enemy must be assessed and risks calculated." "The five factors that would bring about defeat are: Commanding officers at the front operate under interference from the king; knowledge of both sides is absent; disharmony troubles the generals and commanders; espionage is not used; support of the population is lacking." Sun Pin's understanding of the objective laws affecting victory and defeat in war was a simple reflection of the materialist military thinking of the newly emerging feudal landlord class. It was directly opposed to the idealist reactionary theories of people like Confucius and Mencius who held that "invincible are the benevolent," "propriety among the troops will make them perform feats," etc.

During the Spring and Autumn and Warring States Periods, the use of "Tao" to express laws was not a rarity among military works of some outstanding reformists and Legalists, but none excelled Sun Wu and Sun Pin in presenting so complete an analysis of the factors involved in victory and defeat on the battlefield and in viewing them on the plane of "Tao." "Master Sun's Art of War" begins with a probe into "five things" (the way, heaven, earth, generalship and tactics) and "seven stratagems" as conditions "determining victory and defeat." This is more or less the same as Sun Pin's "knowing" five things and "five factors involved in assuring constant victory," but Sun Wu did not clearly view these conditions from the plane of the "way" (laws). On this question, "Sun Pin's Art of War" represents an important development over "Master Sun's Art of War."

(II)

Among the bamboo slips of "Sun Pin's Art of War" the largest amount of space is devoted to an exposition of operational command, which was also richest in content. Especially, such ideas as "attack rather than defend," "attack the many with the few," "utilize the situation," "take advantage of the terrain and make the right choice among the eight formations" deserve serious attention and study.

Emphasis On the Offensive Strategy; Attack Rather Than Defend"

The importance Sun Pin attached to taking an offensive strategy, his whole thinking in regard to "always be on the offensive rather than on the defensive," finds outstanding expression in a conversation he had with T'ien Chi. A general of Ch'i, T'ien asked him: "Are rewards and punishments the most important thing for an army?" Sun Pin replied: "No. To reward is but to make people happy; it makes soldiers fight without fear of death; punishment is but to uphold discipline so that soldiers will respect their officers. They may increase the chances of winning the war, but are not the most important." T'ien asked again: "Is authority, power, plotting and deception the most important matters for an army?" Sun Pin replied: "No. Authority enables you to command the army; power makes the men fight; plotting will take the enemy by surprise; deception will puzzle the enemy and put him in a tight spot. These enhance the chance for victory, but still they are not the most important." T'ien, "embarrassed," said: "These six things are all used by capable commanders, but you, sir, say none of them is the most important. What, then, is the most important to you?" Sun Pin replied: "....keep yourself on the offensive rather than on the defensive, this is the most important thing military commanders should keep in mind." The six points raised by T'ien Chi are important matters in the use of an army, yet Sun Pin thought they could only be regarded as conditions for "enhancing the chance to win," for "being on the offensive rather than on the defensive" was the most important. Obviously, he was talking about strategy and not specific battle actions. Judging by the overall meaning of the dialogue and its historical background, it may be assumed that "keeping on the offensive rather than the defensive" as indicated by Sun Pin was meant to stress the offensive strategy. This was actually one of the important aspects of military thinking advocated by pre-Ch'in Legalists. For example, Sun Wu was one who stressed the importance of taking the offensive. Shang Yang also said: "A nation with its back to the sea should base its strategy on offensive." ("Book of Lord Shang: On Defense") The state of Ch'i, "a state with its back to the sea," was at that time ruled by King Wei representing the newly emerging landlord class. Since "Ch'i was a well-governed state," the various princes "dared not move troops against it." "The people of Ch'u dared not advance to the east," and "the people of Chao dared not fish in the rivers that ran to the east." ("Historical Records: T'ien Ching and Chung Wan") Under these circumstances, it all became natural for the newly emerging feudal class of Ch'i to demand that their dominion be expanded. Sun Pin's "offensive strategy" was brought forward precisely to meet the needs of the feudal class of Ch'i for political and

economic development. Objectively, it also conformed to the trend of social and historical demands for unification and had a certain positive significance.

The Assumption That the Few Could Defeat the Many, the Weak the Strong

In his conversations with King Wei of Ch'i and T'ien Chi, Sun Pin made clear and positive references to the concept of "the few can defeat the many, the weak the strong" on as many as a dozen occasions, besides presenting many battle tactics with which the few could defeat the many and the weak the strong. For example, there is "giving way to the superior force," meaning avoiding the main thrust of the advancing enemy, and not engaging yourself in reckless battles; "building low fortification to show a spirit of fearlessness so as to boost troop morale, issuing strict and clear orders to strengthen the unity of officers and men, avoiding battles to give the enemy reason for feeling proud, hitting and running to wear the enemy out"; deliberately making a show of your weakness "in order to make the enemy arrogant and lower his guard"; "regroup and give the impression that you are retreating north, so that you can attack from their rear," "stay in a place and leave it (to puzzle and disperse the enemy forces), then gather superior forces and attack," etc. Sun Pin also pointed out that the key to defeating the many with the few and the strong with the weak was to concentrate your own forces, disperse and tie down those of the enemy. He argued that "an army capable of dispersing and tying down the enemy forces" might be strong, though numerically inferior; "an army incapable of doing this" would be weak, though several times the size of the enemy army.

Such guiding thought in military operations on the part of Sun Pin in daring to face and defeat a numerically stronger enemy reflected the reformist spirit of the newly emerging feudal class and its desire to realize feudal unification.

However, the reactionaries dreaming of restoring the slave system, represented by Mencius, were filled with extreme hatred for the cause of the newly emerging feudal class for reform and unification. They said: "The small is no match for the big, the few no match for the many, the weak no match for the strong" (Mencius: King Hui of Liang Part I), and "states of equal strength do not attack each other." (Mencius: Chinhsin Part II) They uttered such nonsense in an attempt to stop the rolling wheel of history. But the realization of feudal unification was an irresistible trend of historical development during the middle period of the Warring States. No matter how Mencius and his like cursed the war for unification, the country was eventually unified by the state of Ch'in, whose feudal reforms were instituted more thoroughly.

Emphasis On "Making Use of the Situation," Creating Favorable Battle Postures

The ancients said: "Sun Pin attached great importance to situations." "Sun Pin's Art of War" mentioned "situations" frequently. A chapter entitled

"Making Use of the Situation" emphatically discussed "situation." He used the arrow as an anology, pointing out: "the situation" was like an arrow "launched from between the chest and the shoulders, killing one a hundred paces beyond while giving him no idea where it comes from." In other words, making use of a battle situation favorable to ourselves and unfavorable to the enemy would throw him into confusion, and when he had been defeated, he still would not understand why he had been defeated.

Sun Pin drew, from the changes in the development of matter, the inference that "situations" could be created. He said: "Birth and death are a matter of fact for everything under the sun. Among all living things there are the capable and the incapable; and there are always excesses or inadequacies in a situation." As he saw it, the advantages and disadvantages involved in a war situation were identical to the birth and death, capability and incapability of all living matters under the sun, and this was an ever existent objective fact. Therefore, those who directed war had to "take advantage of the situation relating to the theater of war," provide judicious guidance according to the circumstances, take hold of the initiative and make every effort in attaining a posture favorable to ourselves but disadvantageous to the enemy. In doing so, not only would the fruit of victory be extended, but a losing battle might be turned into a winning one, wearisome tasks full of difficulty might become easy and relaxing, and hunger might be relieved by an abundance of food supplies. On the other hand, the enemy would be forced to "make a long march without rest and without adequate food, though his soldiers are ill and hungry." The result is that "a heavily armored and well trained army is unable to bring its strength into play and the courageous men are unable to protect their generals." It would be placed totally in a passive and disadvantageous position.

How is one to take advantage of the situation and theater of operations? This is something that "Sun Pin's Art of War" makes numerous references to; for example, "anticipate the enemy's action and examine and assess the strategic aspects of the terrain," "maintain and promote the harmony and unity of the whole army, so that advance and retreat may be undertaken with the least inconvenience," "divide up the enemy's forces," "nail the enemy down," "deploy more chariots where the terrain is level, send more cavalrymen where the terrain is hazardous, and use more archers where there is a narrow strip flanked by tall mountains," "see to it that you are holding the high ground and strike at the enemy caught in unfavorable terrain," "never meet the enemy headon when advancing, never block your rear while retreating and never obstruct yourself on both flanks" so that your "four roads (for advancing, retreating and keeping clear the two flanks) would be kept open, and your freedom assured for actions" in order that the enemy's army might be placed in exactly the opposite situation.

Military strategists of all times have always devoted much attention to the idea of laying emphasis on "making use of the situation" and making every effort to keep the initiative in fighting a war. But elaborations as systematic as those by Sun Pin who raised the possibility of creating situations by a full set of specific methods in line with the principle of change in the "birth" and "death" of all matters are a rarity among ancient military experts.

"To Win One Must Not Stick To One Tactic"; Emphasis On Flexible Application of Battle Tactics

Sun Pin believed that it was often the case in wars that a favorable situation did not exist all the time, nor was it possible to stick to one fixed method in dealing with various types of enemies. Therefore, he stressed: "anticipate the enemy's action and assess the strategical aspects of the terrain, survey the distant as well as the near," "take into account the advantages provided by the terrain in choosing the battle tactics." In other words, continuous efforts should be made during war to analyze the enemy's conditions and the terrain, so as to adopt different tactics to suit the different conditions of the enemy and terrain involved.

In such chapters as "Ten Replies" and "Ten Formations," Sun Pin made numerous specific references to flexible use of battle tactics, the more important of which were, for example: in order to defeat a formidable enemy both great in numbers and well-equipped in arms, the tactic should be to "build low fortifications to show that your troops are fearless so that troop morale may be boosted, to issue strict and clear orders to promote unity of officers and men, to avoid battle and give the enemy reason for feeling proud, to hit and run to wear the enemy down, attack him when he is least prepared and least expects it." In dealing with an enemy that is stubbornly ditched in and whose strength more or less balances yours, you should "camp in and fall back in order to puzzle and divert the enemy, then gather together your forces and attack." If the enemy is heavily fortified with the support of favorable terrain, "attack the places where they would not risk losing and have them leave their strategically important positions and fortifications, make out the intents of their actions, lie in ambush as you lure the enemy out and attack while they are on the move." To the numerically superior enemy with brave officers and men, "show them that you are afraid and weak, while preparing and biding time," strike his unguarded points, attack his weak positions, put pressure on his slackened defenses and attack his uncertain positions." As to the weak enemy, "frighten him by displaying your might, attack him when he comes out and encircle him if he doesn't." And so on and so forth.

Attach Importance to the Taking of Cities and the Tactical Deployment of Troops

Sun Pin attached comparatively serious attention to taking cities. He especially discoursed on problems involved in the attacking and occupying of cities, and classified cities in accordance with the terrain of their respective locations into different types of cities as well as those that could be attacked and those that might not. At the same time, he stressed the importance of building up material reserves in the defense of cities. He pointed out explicitly: "A small but defensible city is one with adequate stock of supplies." Sun Pin's detailed elaborations on the attacking of cities were also seldom found in ancient military works before him.

The importance Sun Pin attached to attacking cities had a great deal to do with the historical conditions in the political, economic and military fields at that time. During the Warring States period, "large cities and towns look at each other." Cities became economic, political

and cultural centers where by far the greatest part of social wealth and manpower were concentrated. With the development of production, the advances made in metallurgy, the use of iron weapons, and the introduction of such city attacking devices as the cloud ladder, definite material conditions were provided for assault on cities. Therefore, Sun Pin's idea of attaching importance to attacking cities was in effect a reflection in military thinking of the economic and political development during the Warring Stae period; and it was also a major development of "Master Sun's Art of War" under new conditions.

Sun Pin was also rather specific in his elaborations over the characteristics, functions and applications of various kinds of tactical troop deployments. The troop deployment in ancient times was the equivalent of what is now known as battle formation and its application. Generally speaking, it was rather simple in the time of the Spring and Autumn epoch, for it mainly involved the use of chariots. By the period of the Warring States, due to the development of production, there appeared on the battlefield not only foot soldiers and chariots but also great numbers of cavalrymen and archers. More, as the theater of war was enlarged, the topographic conditions of the battlefields also became more complicated. So, the application of battle formations developed considerably compared with the Spring and Autumn period.

"Sun Pin's Art of War" discussed mainly ten varieties of troop deployments and formations including those taking the form of "square" and "circle" and the shape of instruments and animals and involving the use of fire or water, and dwelt on their functions and applications. For instance, the "square formation is used to intercept the enemy's forces and disrupt his formations"; the "circular formation is used to prevent the enemy from breaking in through a certain gap"; "the pincer formation is used to break through or cut through the enemy's formation"; etc.

Sun Pin especially emphasized the need "for vanguard and rear guard" in a situational formation. Taking the sword as the analogy, he explained vividly: If the formation did not have a sharp vanguard, it would be like "a sword with no blade, and even Meng Feng (a famous warrior in the Warring States period) would not dare to charge"; if it did not have a strong rearguard, it would be like "a sword without a handle, and even an ingenious soldier would find it hard to advance." Only when there is "a vanguard and a rearguard" could you "convince the enemy that your army is immovable, and he must go away." On the contrary, in the case where an army does not have a vanguard and rearguard, "the bold commander that advances is ignorant of the fundamentals of military knowledge."

(III)

The Confucian and Legalist schools had always stood opposed sharply to each other as regards the military line. The Confucians advocated that "Yao and Shun ruled the world with benevolence, and the people followed them." ("Notes on Propriety: Great Learning") "When an army observes propriety, it is invincible." ("Notes on Propriety: Confucius in Yen") This served

their political line of "restraining oneself and returning to propriety." The Legalists stood for "rule of law," and encouraged "attaching importance to law and not to propriety, because when the laws are clear, orders will be obeyed." ("Book of Lord Shang: Strategy") "A disciplined army will win." ("Wu Tzu: Army Discipline") In order to meet the needs of the newly emerging landlord class in building the army and conducting war, "Sun Pin's Art of War," on the question of disciplining the army, holds: "The invincibility of an army is realized through the picking of brave warriors whose courage can come only from the rule of law." Sun Pin indicated clearly that "if rewards are promised but not given, people would have no moral standards; if you were hesitant in eliminating evils, people would have no respect for law." He stressed the importance of "having deeds rewarded the very day they are done" and "having crimes punished promptly without reservation." He maintained: "The granting of rewards will make people happy and soldiers fight without fear of death; punishments will enforce discipline so people will respect their superiors." This was similar to Shang Yang's idea that "the enforcement of laws and decrees will keep the people away from crime" and "granting rewards will make the army powerful." ("Book of Lord Shang: Law Enforcement")

In his plain and simple fashion, Sun Pin was also aware of the importance of warriors and the masses, calling for serious attention to be paid to the role of men, and correctly asserted that "between heaven and earth, nothing is more valuable than man." This reflected the Legalist materialistic viewpoint that "there is a distinction between heaven and man" and "man is bound to triumph over nature." While attributing the basic factor of victory in war to the bravery of warriors, Sun Pin at the same time affirmed the great effect moral support of "the population" had on the outcome of war. "If the army fails to overcome a great foe, it is because what it is doing does not have the support of the people." He proposed that building a strong army should be coupled with "improving the life of the people" and "winning victory with the people's support." In a chapter "How To Be a Good Commander" "Sun Pin's Art of War" listed dozens of causes of losing a war, most of which were attributed to mishandling by commanders which aroused the discontent of soldiers and civilians. For example, "when orders are not carried out, men will be disunited," "discontented men cannot be put to good use," "soldiers are made to suffer," "fear, slow-down and doubts prevail among the soldiers," etc. Therefore, he stressed that soldiers and the people should be treated logically in the same way as "water flows." Judicious guidance according to the circumstances should be given, which should result in "orders being carried out as fast and as efficiently as the water flows down the river," and "no hesitation at all even if ordered to fall on white blades"; otherwise, "it would be like going against the current." Sun Pin also indicated that "if there is to be consistent obedience," there should be "consistent confidence." He believed that "the army commander cannot do without good faith. Without faith, orders would not be carried out, and if orders could not be put into effect, there would be disunity in the army. Once disunity appears among the ranks, nothing can be achieved." On top of this, Sun Pin paid equally serious attention to boosting morale, and listed "the boosting of morale," "doing all that is beneficial to maintaining morale," "the strengthening of morale" and "measures to make sure that the morale lasts," as one of the major tasks of "rallying your forces and uniting the people" to fight the advancing enemy.

With the strengthening of the feudal state apparatus and the expansion of the scale of military operations, higher demands were placed on the quality of the members of the military machine. In view of this need, Sun Pin was for strict selection of recruits for the army, thinking that "the principle governing the use of the army and the mobilization of the people is to weigh the varying factors, with measures taken to select the worthy and the good." At the same time, he was for the idea of organizing and training troops according to local administrative divisions, holding that training should be constant so that the army is always in a state of combat readiness. While calling for selection and training of fine soldiers to raise the army's fighting capability, Sun Pin also laid down strict rules with which commanders had to comply. They were required to "know the ways of heaven and the advantages of the earth," to win the hearts of people, to be aware of the enemy's conditions, to master the tactical deployment of troops as well as the art of command. Only he who possesses these qualities can be a "good general." In the chapter "How To Be a Good Commander," he regarded such moral standards that suited the feudal system as "righteousness," "benevolence," "virtue," "trust," and "wisdom" as the five qualities the commander had to possess, the importance and close relationship of which he viewed as tantamount to one's own head, belly, hands, feet and backside. "Sun Pin's Art of War" attached great importance to the selection and appointment of military commanders. He stressed "officers should be selected strictly on the basis of personal qualifications," and demanded that the daring and resourceful ones should be selected to shoulder the great responsibility of guarding and consolidating the newly rising feudal country. The criteria Sun Pin set for the selection of commanders were completely different from those set in the "hereditary" system practiced by the aristocrats in their slave army, enabling them to monopolize military and political power. They were an embodiment of the Legalist line calling "appointing only the worthy."

(IV)

Sun Pin's Legalist military thinking was theoretically based on his plain and simple version of materialism and dialectics.

Chairman Mao points out: "Both in China and Europe, the dialectical outlook of the universe had already taken shape in ancient times. But ancient dialectics carried a spontaneous, simple character." ("On Contradiction") "Sun Pin's Art of War" was an application of the ancient spontaneous, simple materialism and dialectics on the issue of war.

First of all, on the relationship between "form" and "name," Sun Pin clearly stood on the side of materialism. "Form" means a tangible concrete thing that exists objectively; "name" implies the concept standing for this concrete thing. Which of the two is primary? Does name determines form or form engender name? This was the basic question over which idealism and materialism were locked in fierce debate during the period of the Warring States. Contrary to what the Confucianists stood for with their idealism and metaphysics, Sun Pin held that form was primary, as he said: "When the form is fixed, the name is born," that all tangible concrete things could be expressed by definite concepts, and that things that could be expressed

by concepts were concrete and could be overcome and defeated by other concrete things. Moreover, he pointed out: War is fought and won between two opposing forms of forces, but conditions of war change constantly and must be constantly studied by men. Wars must be fought according to their specific circumstances, and one must not apply a single formula to all types of fighting. Therefore, "Sun Pin's Art of War" holds that "those who are good at war know the enemy's strong points, and those who are wise know his weak points. The wise will use his strong points to deal with the enemy's weak points." To know only one and not all the rest, it will be impossible to win in war. "Sun Pin's Art of War" also points out: The outcome of war, a concrete thing, is as predictable as the development of other things. If "one fails to foresee fortune or misfortune before it occurs," then "one does not know how to get prepared." Obviously, this idea is also in line with the materialist viewpoint, and does not imply anything mysterious.

Second, on the basis of simple materialism, Sun Pin was generally aware of the importance of bringing subjective initiative into full play. He asked: "Are the numerous sure to win? If so, it would merely be a game of counting tallies. Are the rich sure to win? If so, it would merely be a game of counting bags of grain. Are the well-armed and well-equipped destined to win? If so, there would be nothing easier than to point out the victor." If the outcome of war can be determined merely by the number of troops deployed on both sides, the wealth of the opposing states, the quality of arms and equipment of the confronting armies, does not everything become simple and obvious? In fact, that is not so. This means that "the rich may not be secure, the poor may not be in danger, and the numerically superior may not always come out as the victor." In order to win in war, apart from objective material conditions, it is also necessary to bring man's subjective initiative into play, to study and master the laws of war and to exercise correct leadership. This shows that Sun Pin held a simple dialectical approach in the formation of his military thinking.

There is a lot of reflections of spontaneous, simple dialectical thinking in "Sun Pin's Art of War," much of which is embodied in the following passage.

"A concentration of troops will prevail over a dispersal of troops, a formidable force over a weak one, those taking shortcuts over those taking the main routes, those who march fast over those who march slowly, many over the few, the fresh over the worn out. For that reason, the concentrated force may be looked upon as truly the concentrated force, the dispersed the dispersed, the formidable the formidable, the weak the weak, the taker of the shortcut the clever, the user of the highway the stupid, the speedy the speedy, the slow the slow, the numerous the many, the few the few, the fresh the strong, and the worn out the weak. But the concentration and dispersal of troops can be inter-changeable, so could it be with a formidable force and a weak one, the shortcut taker and the high-way user, the speedy and the slow, the numerous and the scanty, the fresh and the worn out. Therefore, it is advisable not to regard the concentrated as always concentrated, the dispersed as always dispersed, the formidable as always formidable, the weak as always weak, the shortcut taker as always a

shortcut taker, the highway user as always a highway user, the numerous as always the numerous, the few as always the few, the fresh as always the fresh, the exhausted as always the exhausted. So it is that a relative interchangeable relationship exists between the concentrated and the dispersed, the formidable and the weak, the shortcut taker and the highway user, the speedy and the slow, the numerous and the few, the fresh and the worn out. Conceivably, the enemy if concentrated could be dispersed, if formidable could be weakened, if used to taking shortcuts could be forced to use the highway, if usually speedy could be slowed down, if numerous could become few, and if fresh could be worn out."

Here, Sun Pin made an initial discovery of the dual character and variability of matter. He pointed out explicitly that concentration and dispersal of troops, the strength and weakness of forces, the use of shortcuts and the negligence of them, the swiftness of troop movement and the lack of it, the superiority in numbers and the outnumbered, the recuperation of troops and the wearing out of them, constitute a series of mutually opposing factors at work in war. These factors, however, do not remain static but can be transformed into each other. Therefore, he felt that so long as the "wise ruler" and his "good generals" directing the war effort were willing to grasp the laws of war and actively create the required conditions, they might bring about a change in the war situation to make it favorable to themselves and unfavorable to the enemy and to win. In this regard, "Sun Pin's Art of War" likewise inherited and developed the thought manifested in Legalist military works such as "Master Sun's Art of War."

(V)

Like all other Legalist works in history, "Sun Pin's Art of War" inevitably suffered from epochal limitations and carried the exploiting-class bias.

On the concept of war, Sun Pin intuitively recognized the inevitability of war and favored "becoming strong and independent through winning in war," thus laying the theoretical basis for the newly emerging landlord class to wage war. However, he did not and could not recognize the class nature of war, and was unable to find out the causes of war and the means by which war could be eliminated.

On the concept of history, Sun Pin put forward the correct view that "between heaven and earth there is nothing more valuable than man," and saw during the course of war the role of soldiers and the importance of support from the people, and felt that it was necessary to make use of the strength of the masses. However, he could not go beyond the scope of the idealist conception of history and failed to see the decisive role played by the masses of people in war. He regarded the "wise ruler," the "sage" and "good generals" as the only people capable of ruling and guarding a state and enhancing its welfare, whereas soldiers were but tools to be ordered around and exploited. As he said: "War may be compared to the use of bows and arrows. Soldiers are like arrows, generals bows, and ruler the archer." Although he believed that soldiers, generals and the ruler were all very important, he nevertheless mainly stressed and exaggerated

the role played by the ruler and his military commanders. This was a hero's conception of history that commanders decided everything. His attitude toward the people likewise reflected the antagonism between the exploiting class and the broad masses of the people. For example, he said: If an army, after entering an enemy's territory, assumed only a "modest" attitude in dealing with the masses of people, first it would lose its dignity; second, it would not be able to find provisions; third, it would find its work hindered; fourth, it would be threatened with hunger; and fifth, it would be unable to accomplish its mission. Therefore, he proposed the simultaneous use of soft and hard tactics.

To sum up, it can be seen that "Sun Pin's Art of War" is indeed a representative work on Legalist military thinking during the Warring States period. It rode the tide of historical development at that time, reflecting the political and military needs of the newly emerging landlord class and directly furnishing a theoretical weapon for the war of feudal unification. Although it has some dross, its progressive tendency is the main aspect. It deservedly ranks as one of the Legalist military works. Some of its views still have a certain vitality even down to this day.

* * *

Commodity -- An Autobiography (II)

by

Ching Ch'ih (景池)

(Hsüeh-hsi yü P'i-p'an /Study and Criticism/, No. 6, June 18, 1975)

Our Family Spawned the Bourgeoisie

How did the bourgeoisie come into this world? It did not drop from the skies, nor did it pop up from the earth. It emerged as a result of prolonged incubation in our family.

As feudal society entered its final stage, the handicraft industry had developed substantially. Commodities were sold at prices based on the amount of socially required labor time needed for their production. While producing us, quite a number of handicraftsmen gave much thought to improving their technology and equipment and to raising their technical efficiency so as to make more money by spending less individually required labor time than the socially required labor time. But when the amount of individually required labor time needed to produce certain commodities generally fell below the socially required labor time, their value would fall, and a new socially required labor time would be set. In this way, cut-throat competition appeared among commodity producers. Such competition spurred technological progress and production growth, but at the same time it also brought about the bankruptcy of those small producers having backward production technology and faulty management. As to those small producers with comparatively superior conditions, they climbed up on the backs of large batches of small producers forced to go to the wall and recruited the latter as workers in their handicraft workshops. Hence the emergence of capitalists.

To go back where we started, the process through which I spawned the bourgeoisie was very complicated indeed, and was not limited to the polarization of small producers. Besides, I spawned a number of merchants and usurers into capitalists.

Merchants constitute a class that does not engage in production. However, by taking advantage of the changes in supply and demand in different localities and price imbalances, they gained ever increasing domination in the realm of production. In the 1720's, there was a member of our family born and raised in the outskirts of Moscow. Its name was "wigs." Its masters were some small producers. Initially, they had to bring their products to the city of Moscow to have them sold, usually at the expense of having to stop production. Subsequently, they asked a woman among them to take the wigs to the city and sell them and to bring back raw materials for them. Her loss in production was compensated with money jointly contributed by them. As time went by, this woman merchant got acquainted with a group of clients in Moscow, and monopolized the marketing of wigs and the procurement of raw material.

She began to make use of her position as a go-between by quoting higher prices to both buyers and sellers in wig transactions and pocketed the difference. She became richer and richer. In due time the wig producers came to depend on this middle-woman, and this woman trader also shouted at random at these wig producers: "Take them to me if you want to, or else go away!" Since they did not know the buyers, these wig producers had no choice but to obey her orders. In the end, those small producers completely lost their independence and became her hired workers. This woman merchant eventually became a capitalist.

With the birth of the bourgeoisie, changes also came about in the laws of my activities. Under conditions of small commodity production, the producers sold some of our fellow family members in exchange for other fellow family members; in other words, they sold in order to buy, as expressed in the formula: commodity -- money -- commodity. Under conditions of capitalist production, things changed: capitalists with money in hand went to the market to buy commodities, processed and re-sold them for money. They bought in order to sell, as expressed in the formula: money -- commodity -- money. The amount of money spent initially by the capitalists and the amount of money they got back later on were of course not the same. If these were, would the capitalists not become fools? The capitalists were very smart. They bought and then sold for the purpose of making more money. But where did all that extra money come from? That was an important secret. It involved a new member of our family, whose appearance completely manifested the capitalist relations of production.

The New Member of Our Family

Who is this new member of our family? The answer may startle you: labor power.

Labor power means the working capability of the laborer. As a member of our family, it, like us, also has two conditions: one, its masters can dispose of it freely, selling it to whomever they like; two, it possesses a dual status of use value and value. I spawned the capitalists and brought about the bankruptcy of the small producers. The labor power of those bankrupt small producers has these two conditions. First, a bankrupt small producer is as poor as a church mouse, but is free to dispose of his labor power, selling it to whomever he likes. Second, this labor power also has use value and value. Thus, labor power joined our family.

Why does the capitalist have to buy labor power? Because this new member of our family has a special flair: the process of its use is the process of its labor; and through the process of labor, it will create a new value. In using labor power, the capitalist throws the labor power into the process of labor to create new value for him. This special ability to create new value is the use value of labor power.

How, then, is the value of labor power calculated? A laborer with labor power requires clothing, food and housing, and has to support his children. Some laborers also have to go to schools in order to cultivate their labor skills. Therefore, the value of labor power is the value of that part of the means of consumption needed for the maintenance of the laborer and his family. Of course, this means of consumption is given the lowest "calculation." The wage paid to the worker by the capitalist is the measurement of labor power in terms of money, i.e., the price of labor power. The value of labor power is created through its own labor. Not only are other members of our family unable to create their own value, but, on the contrary, such value is created by labor power. Having bought labor power the capitalist forces it to work in his factory. In this process, part of the value of raw materials, machinery and plant buildings is shifted to the products it creates, while at the same time adding a new value to the products. Take an example. A capitalist buys a unit of labor power and pays it two dollars a day. This unit of labor power works 6 hours to create a value covering the 2 dollars wage. According to the principle of exchange at equal values, the worker should go home at this time. But then the capitalist comes out and shouts angrily: "No! I bought a unit of labor for 2 dollars. You must work for me for the whole day, not 6 hours." Mind you, once the worker sells his labor power to the capitalist, his body is at the latter's disposal. Therefore, whether he likes it or not, he has to work a full day, for instance 12 hours, creating 4 dollars value. The extra two dollars are pocketed by the capitalist. In the terminology of political economy, this extra value created is called "surplus value." The purpose of the capitalist in buying labor power is to exploit the surplus value so created by the worker through the use of labor power. The surplus value created by the worker not only supports the capitalist but is a source of his wealth. Under such conditions, the capitalist has become a vampire with the utmost greed, and will never stop so long as the worker still has one piece of flesh, one strand of muscle, one drop of blood remaining.

I Became the Real God

Ever since this special member -- labor power -- came to our family, the capitalist relations of production were shaped with exploitation of labor by capital as the axis. Our family proliferated rapidly as the scale of exchanges kept on expanding. We demanded exchange at equal values, we demanded freedom of trade, we broke through the feudal barriers and crossed the boundaries of empires. We were active all over the world. However, though the feudal landlord class had already become decadent at that time, they were still able, with the forces of state power, to oppress our growth. In Europe, the newly emerging bourgeoisie led our huge family of commodities to courageously charge at the feudal system against heavy odds. It was vigorous. For example, in the 17th and 18th centuries a large group of bourgeois thinkers like Locke, Voltaire and Rousseau appeared in England and France. They proved in theory that liberty and equality were part of human nature (in fact the human nature of the bourgeoisie

itself), and attacked the feudal system violently. They cried aloud: "Man was born free, but everywhere he is tied up." Actually, freedom of trade and exchange of equal values were my nature as well as the nature of my master -- the bourgeoisie. Those bourgeois revolutionaries described the freedom I needed as a natural demand, and the equality I wanted as human equality. These were utter lies. Freedom and equality were merely meant for my master, the bourgeoisie itself. To the proletarians, they had only the freedom to sell their labor power, to be exploited and to suffer from hunger. Nevertheless, these slogans of the bourgeoisie had a certain progressive effect on the struggle against the feudal system at that time. The English revolution of the 17th century and the French revolution of the 18th century ushered in a new era of capitalist rule in Europe. From then onward, our family, relying on the bourgeois state power for protection, kept on prospering and entered a golden era.

In capitalist society, members of our family invaded every sphere of society and dominated every person. Ah, how dignified and imposing were we!

In the eyes of the bourgeoisie, I was their only real god. But people worshipped me as a god long before capitalist society began. Ts'ao Hsüeh-ch'in in his "The Dream of the Red Chamber" wrote a song called "Good Enough," which said: "People of the world know the good of gods, but they cannot forget gold and silver." This revealed the essence of the exploiting class which believed in money, and not in god. In Chinese feudal society, many believed in "Marshal Lord Chao," the god of wealth. But only in capitalist society did the bourgeoisie bring the worship of me to its zenith. In the 19th century, an Englishman said rightly: "Once there is proper profit, capital becomes daring. If there is a ten percent profit, its use will be assured anywhere; if there is a twenty percent profit, it will become active; if there is a fifty percent profit, it will be prepared to take risks; for a profit as much as one hundred percent, it will go so far as to trample underfoot all laws on earth; and if there is a three hundred percent profit, it will dare to commit any crime, even at the risk of being sent to the gallows."

The fact is indeed so. Because of me, the bourgeoisie in the 19th century started a new "crusade," hoping to transform the world by means of terror in its own image. The European bourgeoisie of the day, in order to seize vast markets, constructed railroads, opened up sea routes, and led this "crusade" of ours -- commodities -- with guns and cannon, to march toward the ancient orient, the cradle of human civilization, to spread forcibly the "civilization" of the bourgeoisie.

During our march to the east, we first arrived at India. There, we fought many battles, some of our family members such as machine-made cotton and woollen textiles, thrust overbearingly into this Mogul Empire, destroying India's village and communal economy and

exterminating the local hand spinning and weaving industry. India was conquered and became a British colony. The British bourgeoisie grew great amounts of opium on this piece of colonial land and once made it the spear-head of aggression against China. They smuggled large quantities of opium into China and brought from it large quantities of white silver by cheating and looting like greedy vampires. Of course, they could not care less about the tragic sufferings of the Chinese people poisoned by opium.

Where there is oppression there is resistance. Imperialist aggression awakened the Chinese people. There was a Lin Tse-hsü at that time who, with the encouragement and support of the broad masses of people, resolutely set fire to a huge quantity of imported opium, a move that filled everybody's heart with joy. But the British imperialists took this as an excuse and flagrantly launched in 1840 an aggressive war against China, the reputed "Opium War." Faced with the war, the corrupt imperial court of the Ch'ing Dynasty made peace on humiliating terms, ceded land and paid indemnity and signed an unequal treaty with Britain. From then onward, China was reduced to a semi-colonial, semi-feudal society.

With the doors of ancient China blown open by foreign cannon, the colonialists brought into China large quantities of our family members born in Europe and America. They all wore a "foreign" label, such as "foreign cloth," "foreign matches," "foreign umbrellas," "foreign candles," "foreign nails," "foreign kerosene"...., in fact, practically everything was "foreign," "nothing but foreign." They ran amuck on Chinese soil, oppressing their own kind in China.

There were footprints of our family wherever there were human beings, from Asia and Africa to Latin America. Wherever our expeditionary force went, many countries and regions were successively reduced into colonies or semi-colonies of imperialist countries as large numbers of nations and peoples were thrown into the abyss of despair. To be sure, this historical responsibility must be borne by our masters, the bourgeoisie, but I could not escape from complicity.

I Began To Fall from the Peak

The industrial revolutions of the 18th and 19th centuries, together with the new "crusade" to the east, pushed me up to the historical summit. I became a cell of capitalist society. Without my activity, the whole of society would be paralyzed instantly. Having mounted the top, I began to go down the slope. While I was swaggering like a conquering hero, the disease I contracted in my mother's womb started to cause me trouble.

The cause of my disease was my dual identity. Have I said that I had a dual status of use value and value? But the value of one member of our family could only be expressed by another, and could only be realized during the process of exchange. This is something that could be regarded as a matter of life and death for me. In the past, when I was born, I usually had some idea where my master would be taking me. If the blacksmith hammered out a hoe today, he would certainly have it taken to the market and sold tomorrow in exchange for the agricultural and subsidiary produce of the

peasants nearby. If he were unsuccessful in making the exchange, the blacksmith would not make any more hoes but would produce something saleable or simply switch to another trade. But in capitalist society, the situation was different. After my birth, I was taken here and there, even moved around some 18 times before I could take a rest. My master was at a loss to know where my final resting place would be. This was particularly so with the emergence of large-scale socialized production which resulted in an unprecedented rise in the birth rate of our family members. But the proletariat and the broad masses of people became poorer and poorer, they had no money to buy us, they lacked the ability to consume us. Eventually, while we were being mass produced, the bulk of us were fast asleep in the warehouses. The crisis of "over-production" appeared. In the 19th century, many capitalist countries in Europe and America were rocked repeatedly by economic crises of over-production. And the situation worsened with the development of capitalism into its imperialist stage, the situation became even worse. The 1930's was a dark age in the history of our family. The economic crisis that broke out then towed us through hell. In the entire capitalist world at that time, on the one hand our family kept on growing, while on the other hand, the army of unemployed continued to swell. We were rebuffed everywhere. We were either moved around or tied up in warehouse waiting to die. Merchants stopped taking us, banks refused to lend loans, and factories closed down one after the other. A crisis that was to shake the world broke out. Capitalists who had in the past loved us so dearly now revealed their ferocious features. They ordered the execution of great numbers of our family members: we were burned, buried alive or thrown into the sea.... The special member of our family -- labor power -- was also kicked out of factories in huge quantities to wander in the street all day long. The capitalist system of private ownership which we fostered in the early days could no longer meet the requirements of socialized production. Even now, in the capitalist world, such scenes are more or less being repeated every day. The economic crisis which broke out in recent years is still tormenting many of our family members even to this day. Although the house of our big family has not collapsed, it is all rotten inside, revealing our gloomy prospects.

The great October Revolution struck the death knell for the golden age of our family. Things carried to excess are bound to be turned back. This is dialectics, independently of our will. The October Revolution opened up a great historical era for the proletarian socialist revolution. Proletarians and the broad masses of the laboring people began to enter a new century, holding their destiny in their own hands. As to the future of our family, I shudder to think about it; "the sun is setting in the west, and whence will it return?"

If you want to know my fate in socialist society, wait for my next story. (To be continued)

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(Letter from Reader)
- by Han Chiang
a worker-peasant-soldier student of class 73, Department of Philosophy, Nank'ai University

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Biography of Lu Hsün (II) - by Shih I-ko

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